

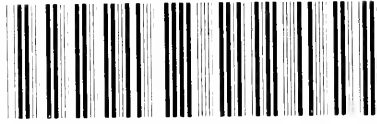
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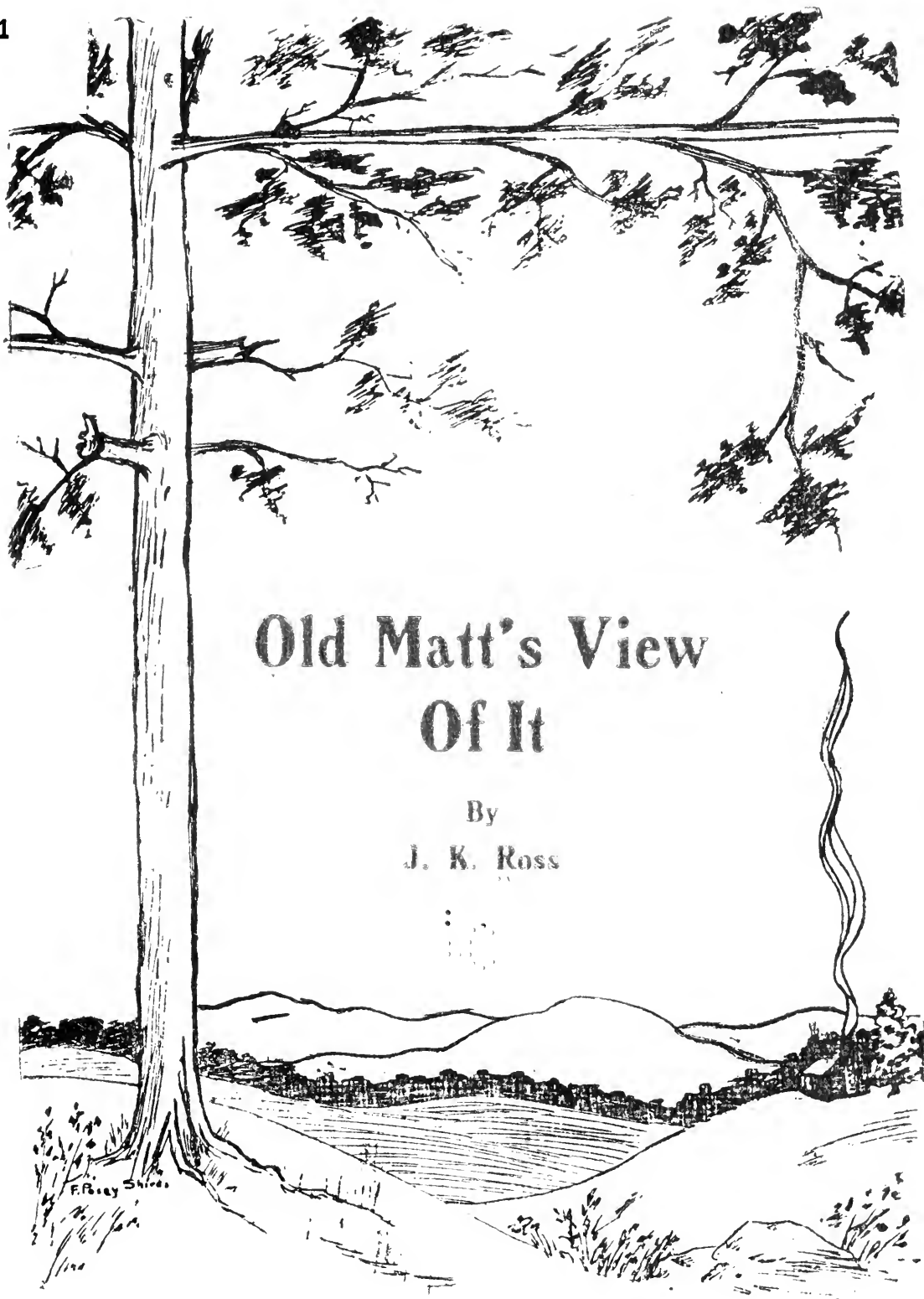
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“Old Matt.”

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MAY 1905

PREFACE.

Without any attempt at literature, or any apologies to add in sketching this little booklet, we have tried only to answer numerous persons who by letter or in person, seek to interview us. If we have made clear any thought worthy of merit or added to the story anything of interest, let the public judge.

Respectfully

J. K. Ross.



Printed by Shiras Brothers,
Mountain Home, Ark.

Old Matt's View Of It.



WID it ever occur to the great multitude of book worms, when reading some interesting book of fiction, that has been written to purposely interest them, that some one has unconsciously been made a victim to give certain details to the story, or more ginger? If not let me cite you to one and incidentally to others too, as a lone victim would look too lonesome for anyone to get really interested in; so we will call in several of them that I am sure you might want to know something of whom they really were and what has become of them.

The principal victim we start to think of was born way back among the Alleghany mountains of Pennsylvania, in the early fifties, and later was partly raised in the less mountainous country of the western part of that state. As a boy he watched the soldiers march to war in the sixties, and practically became the head of a family at ten years of age, when the older head enlisted for the great strife that called men away from homes and families. To say that he was a successful family head could only be determined by special inquiry into details of family life, and how often the patient mother wielded her strap and slipper, a specific form of training that was necessarily administered by the Queen Regent of the household. Boys are boys until they get to be men and then some are yet boys. To say that this one had an easy time of it in his new and added duties

would be a mistake, although he shouldered his honors gracefully; yet from going to school in winter, feeding the stock mornings and evenings, going to the postoffice a mile and a half away at night for the expected letter from the older head who was doing duty in the army of the Potomac, and expecting any day to be left, not as the Crown Prince of the household, but from the expected word that the father had been killed, wounded or taken prisoner in some of the great battles of those critical times, being fought between the North and South, for supremacy in certain human or unhuman rights, its head. All had a tendency to make this boy feel that he was really a man with a man's cares. Cares that were at times too much for one so young to carry. The counsel of a devoted mother, however, helped to smooth the thorny pathway and as time passed and news came that the father would soon be at home again, that the cruel war would soon be over and that the cares of life would be lifted from his young shoulders, this boy began to feel his freedom once more as a boy.

The close of the war left those whose lives were spared free to return to their homes and again take up the broken strands where they left them years before, and instead of being expert at gun and sword practice, to give their attention to the plow that had rested and rusted so long; to become producers again instead of consumers; to give to their families, long neglected, the attention due them and to replace empty granaries with corn and wheat; to grow more live stock to replace what had been sold to keep the wolf from the door

during their long absence. Right here began this boy's future battle. It was found necessary that every boy must make a hand in the field. The war had depleted the ranks of the young men; the boy had to do his part at the plow and at other farm work that he could do. He was hired out to a farmer to help bring in some of the income necessary to support a large family. After a couple of years the old home was sold at a good price. The farm consisting of about seven acres, with its big corn field, the meadow land and a pasture brought the sum of seven hundred dollars or \$100 per acre. The family, with this great amount of money for them, together with the personal effects, gave the family purse sufficient funds to move, and Westward they wandered into western Indiana. The boy, advanced now more in years and stronger, worked again and helped pay for an 80-acre farm among the swamps and sand hills peculiar to that country, but nevertheless fertile and productive. After a time here the family was stricken with ague and other sickness peculiar to the country. Amidst the ever croaking bull frogs and high fever "time was tedious to the young," and the boy now approaching manhood but whose health was wrecked from fever and ague found it necessary to embark with a school teacher to the West in search of health, and to grow up with the country. They were taken to the railroad station early one morning by the teacher's father who bid them good-bye with—"I will look for you both back to help harvest." But the two young men assured him that he must depend on other help, as they were going to the

then Far West, to become a part of that drift that was to become lodged in a wild country that afterward would swell into a mighty mass of populous humanity that it takes to make a state great.

Their adventures, however, were not the kind to set the country ablaze. The school teacher soon tired of Western life and returned to his native home in the early fall. Let us remark here that the devotion to a sweetheart left behind hastened his conclusion. The boy was now a man and was left to mark out his own time but not without importunities to return with his old friend. But no! As he looked at it it would show weakness on his part. He had left no sweetheart to pull on the home coming strings of love and passion. Besides he told the old folks when he left them that it would take a year at least to satisfy him, if not longer. With this determination he set himself to stay any attempt at homesickness, and accepted the best opportunities that came his way. To make himself at home among strangers in a strange land. Months extended to years. The seasons changed from summer to winter and again from winter to spring. Letters came regularly from the old home in the East with strong invitations to return, but he was not ready. That something about Western life that enchants one so much, held him fast to his new surroundings. The great fire that laid waste that great metropolis of the West, Chicago, offered Westerners inducements to go East and see the results of the great conflagration and to incidentally drop off and visit old friends in nearly every county. But the once

boy of the East, withstood all these desires as he had others, and held on to his Western prospects. As he became better acquainted with the people the better he liked them. Kansas at that time had very few that could call Kansas their home, as the settlements were made up of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and Kentucky folks, with once and a while a family from Virginia and Pennsylvania and other far Eastern states. The young man could be at home with any of them.

We recall once when traveling across the country, we stopped at a farm house to put up for the night. The farmer said, "It was as his wife said" and called her to the door. Her first question was, "Where are you from?" When told from Indiana she said "Why law yes, come right in, I would be glad to see a dog from Indiana." Needless to say we were made as comfortable as could be, with a parting word to come again.

It is no wonder that the great West has become as one great fraternal organization, where the stranger is always made at home. It has produced for "the day," some of the greatest developments of modern age and men.

The young man found his principal stopping place on the banks of the Neosha river, below Burlington, at one time a trading post. It was there he met with what helped to bring him in closer communion with the new country. A nursery man who had been orphaned in Ohio had drifted West and had finally settled on the rich Neosha table land, set out a large orchard, raised fruit trees to plant on the then wild prairies and also raised

a large family of boys and girls that went in later days to help make up the citizenship of that great state. The young man became attached to one of the girls and married, and with one to help him started to make a home of his own. Everything was going in the usual course; some stock was being accumulated and the resources were growing yearly. Then came the great grasshopper year that has gone down into Kansas history. They swept the crops before them, leaving in their wake a desolate path as if a great fire had swept over and cleaned the earth of all in its way. It now became necessary to cast around for some occupation to turn to, to cover the loss of crops and provide a living for his family and stock. He was not alone in this great distress of want and famine. Others too had to make arrangements to sell what they had or move out. Just when everything began to look serious friends in Iowa sent a pressing invitation to come where work was plentiful with feed to spare. With their belongings loaded into a wagon the young couple started for that Northern harbor of plenty, and after the first day out became a part of a long train slowly trekking Eastward to join friends who had plenty and to spare. This move was only intended to be temporary, for all had intended to return to their places now made desolate, and again strive for a living in the land they loved. A year's absence would probably remove all difficulties and again give a chance to sow and reap bountiful harvests.

How many of these who left their homes on only a short leave of absence ever returned is a question hard

to answer, for when a pilgrim starts to travel there is no knowing where he will stop. After three weeks of travel the young couple landed in Iowa in the Skunk river bottoms where indeed the crops had been bountiful. The road for the last few days of their journey had been littered with corn fallen from overloaded wagons. The owners had not considered it worth while to stop and pick it up. It proved to be a blessing for the moving van on the road, as it lessened the expense for feed of teams. Incidentally we should remark that on our route North we passed through Kansas City, at that time perched on the dirt bluffs of the Missouri river. In passing up the main street, that seemed to be the center of business at that time, we would judge that the town was about the size of Aurora, Mo., 4000 inhabitants. Westport, now a part of that great city, lay about four miles out. We crossed a street car track equipped with small cars drawn by mules that carried passengers between the two towns that are now welded into one great solid built up city of thousands of people, with modern street cars penetrating every corner. Kansas City then was nothing but an overgrown village in a rich farming country. How time improves

To return to our arrival in Iowa. We were supplied with good quarters and plenty of work. That winter though was one of the longest ever experienced. It seemed as if spring would never come. It was blizzard after blizzard, cold waves every day, thermometer below zero nearly all the time; it was something the young couple were unused to, for in Kansas late au-

tumns and early springs, with warm balmy weather were the rule. But the young couple made the best of their surroundings and with plenty of work to do were soon recuperating what had been lost the year before. When summer came a pressing invitation was received by the young man to return to the old home in Indiana. The old father was sick, crops were neglected and help was scarce. With good inducements offered the young couple sold off their personal effects and this time instead of by wagon route, they took the train for the old home the boy had left at the beginning of his manhood to seek his fortune in the great West. Things had changed wonderfully in his few years of absence. The father and mother had become gray and stooped; the little tots had become young men and women; old associates had married, some gone to the West, others settled down near their old homes. A kindly welcome was extended the young Western couple, yet it was not home to them. They longed for their place in Kansas where the young wife had been raised and her family had become adopted as one of a family that make up Western life. Eastern habits and customs were unlike Western life, lacking that freedom that belongs only to Western people. The people of Indiana, although it had been at one time considered a Western state had become conventional in their ways, that was noticed more particularly by those who had been West and returned. Yet with all these little differences, the young couple again set up their own household and tried to be satisfied with their lot. As time brings changes this young couple were blessed

by the advent of a young son and this event helped to make times more agreeable. More time was devoted now to planning to return West for the son that some day would become a part of a nation and pose as a hero to read about. Little was thought about what his actual future had been in those days. He was just a common poor man's baby boy. That was all, although as he grew to be more interesting and was jostled by aunts, uncles, parents, neighbors and young ladies, no vision of the future bothered him in the least. As time rolled on and the youngster was a year old the young mother sickened and died. The young father was left not only himself without a helpmate but with the young baby boy to be cared for. For four years the battle of life was kept up. The baby boy was cared for at different places, but at no time neglected by the lonely father who held his son as an ever binding link between him and her who had started to work out a future of their own. Plans of return to the West were not thought of any more, for to return alone would only add sorrow to sadness. So on the prairies of west Indiana, amid great cornfields, the man found himself at home among farmers, to help till the great fields of corn, oats and wheat. The boy son was taken where he could be well looked after, with the anxious father who now bestowed all his affection on the only thing left of a once happy household.

About this time there arrived in the same neighborhood a young woman from southern Indiana, a Kentuckian by birth, who had been left motherless when a small girl and who was reared by an uncle in the neighbor-

hood where lived the "Tall Sycamore of the West," and General Lew Wallace, who made his name famous with his rich brains. Needless to say this lass with Kentucky blood in her veins and amid favorable surroundings of talent and genius was a bright spot in the community. She had her own way to make through life unaided by wealth or its influence, and became a seamstress, and worked long days and nights to please a patronizing set of customers. It was during this time that the baby boy was kept by an old couple, at whose home was also the occasional stopping place of the father, that the young woman happened in some way, and took up her abode there and called it home. Interest in the boy baby was as much manifested as was that of the father. As time passed on this interest ripened into courtship and finally marriage. The baby boy had gained another mother; the man a new helpmate to try life's stormy voyage again. Several years passed with nothing to mar their happiness. A new home was built in town; the man was honored by his fellow citizens and everything moved in the regular channel of life's road to success. The baby boy grew, and in time went to school and advanced fast in any study he undertook, was complimented for his brightness as much as those boys of wealthier parents. He was always able to entertain in his childish way either young or old, and as in after life when he grew to manhood he found delight in conversing with old people and had a way to interest everyone that he came in contact with. He had that peculiar gift of conversation to suit any company that he might be

in, sometimes even clownish for certain young people. At other times he would delve into history and science with the older ones. He was a great lover of mechanics. This will all show how in after life the baby boy became an interesting companion to a bookman.

The great wave of speculation came for homes in the Dakotas. Many families moved to that new country. All that prevented this one family, the man, wife and boy from going was the failure to sell their home that they may have the use of the small capital to invest in a new home. Without it they must stay and wait. Next year instead of booming reports from the Northwest, southwest Missouri came in for its share. Great advertising circulars were sent East to attract settlers to a portion of Missouri never heard of before. The railroad from Kansas City to Memphis through Springfield, had made it possible for people to see this new land of untold wealth and health. A sale of the home was finally made and on an early March day, the man leaving the wife and son with friends started for the new country, leaving behind him great drifts of snow but landing after a two-days journey in a land of sunshine and peach blossoms. He landed in West Plains, Mo., to look out a new place. As money was not to be spent carelessly he secured employment as a carpenter, and as was formerly agreed before he left home, not to send for the wife and boy until a place was secured where they would always stay, as if such was the habit of an American, once started on the road. Days became weeks. The man was not suited. While he found a people kind and hos-

pitabile, work and plenty of it was the field he was seeking and it was not here. Men came to town by the score in hunt of work to maintain their families. Things began to look uncertain in the work line and the man changed his base to Springfield, where work was more plentiful and after a short time the family joined him. To say that all was happiness would be a sad mistake, for among entire strangers and no one to go to for help if needed, added to the strained circumstances during the winter. A fire one day burning out a grocery store paved the way for the man. He found employment and from then on gained favor and acquaintance enough that he was hardly ever idle. His boy went to school, learned fast and grew more interesting, gaining knowledge of men and things. The wife did her part to make the home one of cheer and happiness, such as belonged to the man who was dependant on wages for a maintenance. A new beginning had been made, and to keep to the front every detail was looked into that the family in this strange city and among strangers might make a creditable living all independent of the aid of old friends. A large house on a prominent street was rented and opened up as a hotel. The wife showed her ability in cooking and hotel management that kept the house well filled every day. The boy, when not in school, sold papers on the streets. The man wielded his hammer and his saw and revenue was added from all these, to add to the family fund for incidental usage. Finally the man became a building contractor and the hotel was left out of the business, but not without its benefits, for it was here

that the boy began to learn life's battles from others who talked of their ups and downs, misfortunes and fortunes, about the different ways to make things go, etc. This all had a tendency to awake the boy's mind to better things. On Saturday while not at school he would take his lunch and, with a few chums, go out in the country, always coming home fascinated with what he had seen, and he grew to love the country more than the city life that he had always been accustomed to. He had seen the want and misery of the city life and the lack of freedom. He enjoyed the hunting and fishing of the country and listening to the songs of wild birds, the whirr of the reaper in the field, the independence of the plough boy and the cheerfulness of the farmer's life. When they told him and his chums to help themselves to ripening fruit so much enjoyed by them, the contrast of playing marbles and finding recreation in other city boy's sports did not appeal to him. The boy began to think about it all. Coming in one day after one of these jaunts to the country, he said, "Pa, let us move to the country. I can learn to plough and raise corn." The wife also took to the boy's way of thinking. She could raise poultry, have chickens, butter and eggs to send to market. It would be of more interest to her than being a consumer all the time, in town where everything was to buy. The man, raised as he was on the farm, warmed up to the idea. The town property, that from years of hard toil had become their home, was traded for forty acres ten miles from town, with a good orchard, quite a comfortable house and altogether a pretty nice country

home. The family moved on to the new venture, but the man, being short of the necessary funds to buy all that was needed to carry on farming, still worked at building in town, while the boy, with one horse and the aid of a neighbor, put in a crop. The boy learned to till the soil, to gain a better knowledge of country life, and at the end of the week when the father returned the boy could always tell what he had accomplished and what he had learned. In the fall it was the boy's delight to load up the good, fresh apples, carefully packed in boxes, and haul them to town to market, where he was always welcomed by his old acquaintances and a top price paid for his apples, all good and fresh. He was satisfied to find himself in the position of a producer and a vender of his own products. Coming home one night, he said: "No more city for me. The boys are all glad to see me and want me to come and stay in town some, but Pa, I don't want to. I have not the time; besides here in the country there is so much more fun. Real solid enjoyment, whether at work in the field or orchard, at the neighboring postoffice or visiting with the neighbors." It was all real fun and keen enjoyment. A life such as he was beginning to realize that a boy grew to be a man for.

The great drouth up in the Dakotas drove many people to the South seeking for a place that they might find a milder winter climate and where crops were more abundant; where they might live more easily. Coupled with this Northern drought was a greater, more widely spread disease called panic. During this

winter banks failed, business houses became bankrupt, and laboring men were thrown out of work. The farmer likewise suffered from the scarcity of money to meet obligations. And everything showed general depreciation in value, including land. It was during this panic that the man, wife and boy began to realize that they too, were hard pressed to meet demands on additional land that had been bought. A mortgage had been given to secure the debt. Times were hard indeed, and money to meet the interest could not be raised. The holder of the note insisted that it must be paid. Foreclosure was ordered and the land advertised to sell. The foreclosure never took place, however, as the place was sold before the time set, at private sale, to one of the many homeseekers who were then coming in from the droughts-tricken North.

It bought enough to put the family on their feet again, but homeless. A short time previous to this the boy had made a trip to the White river country and had come home all aroused over the new country he had seen. He liked the people he had met far from railroads and big towns. He saw how contented they were, those plain, backwoods folk. They knew nothing of the panic; just lived anyhow on God-given things. They had plenty of hogs for meat, wild turkey, deer, fish and productive farms. What cared they for panics? The boy stated that government land was plentiful. A new home could be made. The wife and her sister, who had in the meantime become a member of the family, demurred on account of society, a lack of places to go foreign to

pioneer life. But the man and the boy insisted on the change. A trip was made to select a location, and one hot day in August the man found himself, by the aid of an old settler, looking over a quarter section of land high up on the mountain top, in view of a signal tree so designated by the government geological department. The day was hot, yet in the forest of this mountain there was invigorating air; a cooling breeze swept through, and on the whole the location was so inviting that the man said to the old settler, "Here is the place for our new home." The man too had seen from this trip the kind hospitality of the people of this secluded land and, although the land was very rough, he could see the possibilities ahead. Others would soon be coming to take up land, and for the same reason that he had. Returning to Springfield, he filed on the land. Then he returned to the old place called home. The wife and boy were told that a new possession had been secured. No mortgages, no taxes for the next five years to bother them. The crops on the old place were retained and had to be cared for. There was a small crop of wheat and an abundant crop of apples. There was a hurried harvest and arrangements were hurriedly made to move to the new mountain home before winter. The father and son made a trip with a load of tools and necessary supplies. Immediately upon their arrival they began the erection of a house. As saw mills were scarce in those days and a long haul was necessary to get lumber, they decided to build a log house. This kind of building material was plentiful. Many things were to be looked

after before the family could all be together again. In Low Gap, high up between two ridges, it was decided to build the new house, the Matthews home, as the location, besides being convenient to all parts of the mountainous farm, gave an excellent view of the surrounding country. On the southeast Kirbyville loomed up impressively. Twenty miles to the northeast one could see Taneyville though the azure space, and away down in Baxter county, Arkansas, could be seen a mountain with a signal tree towering high up in the sky against the green background of the far-reaching hills. Again in Ozark county arose two bald knobs that stood out prominently among their lesser brothers as silent sentinels. To the south, over to the farthest tier of mountains, the eye could wander over all of north Arkansas, and by the aid of a small field glass farmers could be seen at work on their small mountain farms south of the White river. To the north eight miles was as far as the vision reached. On their own mountain was scenery that fascinated the soul. There was also rich, black soil to produce the necessities of life, and with renewed energy the father set to work to build a new home. The boy and the man with axes felled the giant white oak trees. They hewed and shaped the logs for the dwelling; but work as fast as they could, the house was not completed by fall. A room was rented, however, on Fall creek with a kind neighbor and his wife, and just before Thanksgiving the father returned from Green county with the wife and sister, and while the temporary home was made on the creek, the father and son con-

tinued their work of building. During the winter the house was brought to practical completion and the family moved in, in the early spring. To speak of the joys and inconveniences incident to that new home would take long to tell. A house and home in the woods without a yard fence; a place yet to be cleared for the family garden and fenced, with more land, later on; and the land to be broken up and planted to corn furnished work enough for several men, but these two, father and son, without capital but with plenty of vim, went to work. Soon the garden, the first thing to be thought of, was prepared, and here the "Aunt Mollie" to-be planted her early vegetables. The father and son next turned their attention to clearing up a field for corn and potatoes. To see things grow and to cast a wondering eye over the beautiful landscape of the hills was company for the time being. The making of the new home absorbed all other thoughts. High up on the mountain where the very air breathed a new inspiration of life, time passed rapidly. The season passed over as seasons do. The harvest and the garden were all that could be expected, the virgin soil yielding a bountiful crop. The work of clearing more land was continued.

CHAPTER II.

While in the clearing one morning, the father and son being busy splitting rails, there rode up two young men on horseback. One was an old acquaintance of the boy from near Aurora, an old business chum, who in former years had been a partner in a threshing machine. His companion was a tall, sharp looking young man, that to all appearance carried together a look of intelligence and business. After a friendly salute and a little chat, the two said they must be on their way. They were trying to locate the father and brother of the man of culture that had wandered down into the wilderness of Arkansas, trapping and hunting, and who were sick and in need of help. A friendly good-bye was passed and they started off to the east on their errand of mercy to help an old father and brother to the needs of life. But their plans were blocked; for when they reached Hensley's Ferry on White river, it was found that the river had been swollen from recent rains to such a depth that ferrying was out of the question for a day or two at least. The two were up against it, and wheeling their horses they started on the back track and reached the mountain home again that day after swimming several creeks. They rode in about dark and were entertained by the homesteader and his son. The man of culture said that he must be in Pierce City within the next two days to marry a young couple that were good friends of his, and, as the waters of the White river had prevented their hurried mission to the hills, they would return and start over again. It was

while on this trip that man of culture and intelligence and who proved to be a minister, took in the surrounding scenery, casting an admiring eye on Dewey Bald, admiring the view of Kirbyville, twelve miles away, and again at the mountains away south. The scenery charmed him. The peaceful quiet of the hills held his interest. It was the beauties that he saw on this trip that he afterward proclaimed to the world in print. Next morning with a pleasant parting and a cordial invitation from the homesteader and his son to come again they left.

CHAPTER III.

The season passed; crops were again raised and nearly ready for the harvest. It was early in July when one day a wagon heavily loaded with a camp outfit drove up with several people. The cultured man was there and with him the father and son, who had been located away down in the swamps of northeast Arkansas, sick and in need and rescued. They had been taken home, recuperated in health, and now made part of the party on an outing such as can be had only in the Ozark country. The homesteader gave them cheerful welcome. The wife extended friendly greeting to the minister's wife and a lady friend, both women of culture and refinement, and all bent on having a jolly time. Tents were raised and the party were at home to enjoy themselves, hunting, reading, writing and breathing in the exhilarating mountain air. It was observed that the minister and his wife took long tramps over the hills, canvas and brushes being part of their daily equipment, and it developed later that the minister was an artist and that he was also busy writing manuscript for a book of some kind. Several weeks passed. There were horseback rides and hunting and visits back and forth to the homesteader's house, and a good time was enjoyed by all. It was while in camp that an old sheep herder and his faithful dog called on the party. He would come and sit and chat while his sheep grazed over hill and dale at will. He and his faithful dog drove the sheep home at night down the hollow to the corral, where they would be safe from harm from any prowling wolf in search of

mutton chops. Hence Mutton Hollow and the old sheep trail came into print. Time came to break camp. The minister must return after his vacation to his pastorate out West. Goodbys and leave-takings were spoken with strong feelings of friendship and the party left, saying they would be back another year to camp and enjoy the quiet mountain life.

CHAPTER IV.

A year had passed. An occasional letter had been exchanged by campers and homesteaders. During that time the homesteader was notified that an express package awaited him at Marionville, some fifty miles away, the nearest railroad point. The elder homesteader made the trip, which took three days with a team. He stopped at the mill at the same time for a fortnight's supply of flour. The package was prepaid and upon returning home it was found to contain a lot of choice magazines and a large family Bible with the name of the donors neatly subscribed on the fly leaf. Needless to say this one item will be treasured long after the campers and the homesteader have passed away. Then came the best of all, "That Printer of Udells," a handsome book and a strong healthy story of the Ozarks, the result of the camp life and the companionship that was enjoyed the year before.

The minister returned again in the late fall with a physician of Pittsburg, Kas., a member of his church. Several days were spent in the hills hunting, and several trips were made to White river where the fish were disturbed, but not many of them ever left the river. The twomen, with the young homesteader, would turn in at night with appalling appetites, weary and tired out. Rejuvenated, the minister and the doctor returned to their homes in the West. The one to his parish, freshened up in mind and body from breathing the pure mountain air, the other to his practice, to visit the sick

with renewed energy. Correspondence was now kept up, with future plans to visit again the mountains the next year for a three months vacation.

CHAPTER V.

It was one hot day in July; corn had been laid by, and the homesteader and his son were at work on their saw mill. The farmers, now that crops were laid by, were turning their attention to building. Not constructing houses patterned after the styles of the older country, but plain little mountain homes. Even when the house was to be made of logs, they had to have lumber for flooring, sheeting to nail the roof to, and other boards. Lumber too was used in the building of the stables for their stock. About the time that year the homesteader and his son were getting ready to go to work in the sawmill, there drove up one day a heavily loaded dray from Galena. It contained a large tent, carpets, chairs, a desk and numerous other things that go to make up a complete camping outfit. The minister, who had left his pulpit far behind, had the appearance of a weary traveler. He was garbed in straw hat and colored shirt. For pants he wore a pair of blue overalls. After friendly greetings he asked the homesteader if he could pitch his tent where he would choose. When assured that he could, and everything would be done to his desire, after a careful survey, he selected a knoll in the midst of the growing corn now in roasting ear. A high place, so he might have the advantage of an obstructed view of Dewey Bald, and other ridges that stretched away as far as the eye could reach. The purpose of his visit this time was to write another book. The tent was set up; a floor was sawed out by the old homesteader and his son at the mill, and the rooms were

arranged. A fine studio was made with a southern exposure, neatly carpeted and furnished with easy rocking chairs. Lamps were hung from the ridge pole, and all arranged in modern form. In the meantime the son was engaged to help gather data and to pilot the minister around the country and through the mountains. They tramped day after day over the country, noting what this man and that boy had to say and the way they said it. They studied nature and the character of the hills.

Preaching Bill, that lived over south on Compton road, was employed by the homesteader in his farm work and to help run the saw mill. Preaching Bill, one of those mountaineers somewhat deficient in education but endowed with talent to talk after his crude way of reasoning, attracted the bookman. He often visited the tent for a cool drink, and although oftentimes quite annoying, was endured. Preaching Bill had a curiosity and it was thoroughly aroused to see what was doing. It was at such times that the bookman was able to catch many of his quaint sayings. Bill had a large family—worked a great deal but liked to fish better than any man in the country. He was also full of information; could tell you just how and where moonshine was made, and of the numerous narrow escapes from revenue men; just how long white mule would keep, and how much ashes to put in a batch of corn to give it the proper red. In fact what Bill did not know about everything was hardly worth encumbering ones mind with. He finally sold

his homestead and moved to Oklahoma, where he now resides.

Among the many visitors was Sammy Lane, who at that time was receiving attentions from the old homesteader's son. She often stayed with the Matthew family to help Aunt Mollie with work, and it was during such periods as these that the bookman, a close observer, could gather notes and make deductions, as he took his meals with the homesteader's family. She often in company with the son, Young Matt, spent much time at the bookman's tent, pouring over volumes of books that treated on all topics. A strong friendship sprung up between them all.

CHAPTER VI.

"But where is Sammy now?" is often asked by many. She and the younger Matthews did not marry. Circumstances that always come when not expected called her to go away for a time to secure employment and make her own way. She found herself deserted by one now expected to help and stand by her, and too proud to appeal to Young Matt in her distress, she went West to a sister and there remained. Although called on and visited by Young Matt, another had claimed her heart, and Young Matt returned home saddened by the fact that he had lost his sweetheart. Sammy, at the last account we had of her, had been twice married and as many times left a widow. Her lot had been cast along a thorny pathway, with the thorns often piercing her tender feet. Happiness and sorrow together bore down on that young life, "that tried the path that nobody knows how old," to realize both the upper and lower levels to which it leads us all.

"Where is Young Matt?" ask many. We feel it our duty to answer the question. After his disappointment with Sammy had worn off, he, like other young men with brave hearts, did not go and drown himself, nor did he vow that he would never again be caught in a love scrape. Somehow, though, the old home had ceased to be the place he wanted to stay. The father, without his son's help, did not feel that he and "Aunt Mollie" should be left alone to manage the large ranch without his son's help. Arrangements were made and the father and son started a small business on the new White River railroad,

now opened up for traffic down the valley of Roark creek. The older man became postmaster at the little town of Garber; the younger, his assistant and partner in business. Old Kate, that raised the mule, had died. The young mule and an older sister had become a team, and Young Matt took many a ride on their backs, over hills he had long loved.

Time changes and helps to erase a great deal of the past. It also adds something else in its place. The Pacific coast was now attracting many, and the son now looked to the far West for his future. One day the son took the train from the very place he had helped to found as a flag station for the convenience of others; climbed aboard on the same railroad he had watched built from its beginning, and bidding his father and Aunt Mollie goodby, left behind him all the scenes of his childhood days. Landing in the desert country near where the ocean tides beat on sunburned shores, the son found a location, but not until he had found a mate, who, in former years had shared her love with him but gone West and had been awaiting his coming. They two set out to build a future home. Many letters have since been received from the one who had taken Sammy's place in Young Matt's affections as a daughter to Old Matt and Aunt Mollie.

The old sawmill with the grist mill burrs yet stands as he left it in the woods, a prey to tourists, who have carried away nearly everything about it but the boiler and flywheel for souvenirs. Of the engine that Young

Matt loved and had time and time again put so much of his work and life into, around which so many had gathered to get their little sack of meal, there is little left but the heavier parts. Around this old plant the neighbors were wont to gather from Saturday to Saturday when they could discuss with friendly views the news of the settlement. It was at these meetings that Mr. Wright caught many of the expressions used in his book. The old engine now seems to say, "Why am I deserted; where is my young master gone?" Young Matt and his wife did not stay long in the desert, where life was strenuous and where the water they drank flowed not from fresh mountain springs like in the Ozark hills that they had always loved, but from great irrigation ditches far up the Colorado river. It was filtered and made to take the place of living springs. After a year of this life the young man, with his companion, moved to more fertile valleys of the West, where they now live. Young Matt is the engineer in a big packing plant, with a loving wife to cheer him when he returns at eventide begrimed by the day's work. Old Matt still keeps the little postoffice, wrestling with the new rules that Uncle Sam lays down, and Aunt Mollie entertains the best she can the many who call to pay her homage in her evening of life's journey over "the path that is nobody knows how old."

The postoffice at the cross roads is still presided over by the same old Uncle Ike of "The Shepherd of the Hills," and he is often called to pose for a snap shot, sometimes in the right humor, and at others, "ba thundas,"

everything is wrong. The old chair that rocked and creaked in the days of Harold Bell Wright's visits has been replaced by another. The office has been moved out of the dwelling house to a place by itself, but the same old ways of the government representative are unchanged, except that he is getting older and more enfeebled by age. The Compton road winds its way over the ridge as then, with here and there a change. White Slick Rock ford, named from its slipperiness, over which many a team has fallen, in spite of the utmost care for fear of crippling a horse, is still the same. Dewey Bald, so named from the fact that many years ago a cattleman by that name had his camping place at its base, still raises its head majestically in the azure sky. The cool refreshing breezes of summer and the cold blasts of winter alike play on its sides and summit in the seasons, and the tourists find a haven of rest there while looking over Mutton Hollow, and again at the trains as they run swiftly up and down Roark creek; the prophecy of Harold Bell Wright has been fulfilled. The old signal tree stands out in bold relief proclaiming to all the world the grandness of the Ozark mountains, and as a beacon by day to help the visitor keep his course while wandering over the Ozark country. An automobile route is being arranged for at the present time that will encircle old Dewey Bald, that visitors with less inconvenience may take in the scenery, not only of the mountain but Sammy's Lookout, which is a picture and where many, with book in hand, have sat and looked back to the days when Sammy sat there and pondered

over the future. The cabin in Mutton Hollow has been moved away; the old corral is no more. The old shepherd met with a violent death a few years ago north of Aurora by an enraged bull. Wash Gibbs, Ollie, and Pete and his mother we fail to account for, as these belong to the author. Many have asked us is this a true story. Our answer is, Yes, in the sense it was intended for, as all the locations and landmarks are being almost daily traced out, not only by the curious and sentimental, but by professional people of all callings. The minister can take a view of nature's two levels, the higher and the lower "trails of life". The doctor finds balm for his weary practice. The college professor finds something to lift his thoughts higher than just mere book study. Even the lawyer finds ways that his client may be benefited from his looking into the various recesses that offer a place of refuge if needed.

The old Matthews home is there nearly as it was where Mr. Wright took his meals; but the old dinner bell that chimed him to dinner has been sold to the Presbyterian assembly and is doing duty on their encampment ground on the hill across the river from Branson, Mo. The great beds of flowers that Aunt Mollie loved and kept in trim and among which Mr. Wright often rambled, lured by their sweet perfume, and that seemed to feed his mind with the loftiest of thoughts, is not there. The old farm has been sold to other parties, the mortgage paid off; but Old Matt and Aunt Mollie look back to those days of pioneer hard-

ships, mingled once in a while with joy, but regret that they parted with the old home.

And now with a parting tribute to Harold Bell Wright, who builded greater than he reckoned; for have they not been coming from the far West, East, North and South to see for themselves the beauties of "The Shepherd of the Hills", as truly described by Mr. Wright, and to breathe in the pure and exhilarating mountain air, as he did?

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